STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING AND PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING

RE: REPLACEMENT OF MNRR BRIDGE OVER ATLANTIC STREET AND RECONSTRUCTION OF ATLANTIC STREET, STAMFORD

PROJECT NO. 135-301

NOVEMBER 19, 2013

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. . .Verbatim proceedings of a hearing before the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, in the matter of the replacement of MNRR bridge over Atlantic Street and reconstruction of Atlantic Street, held at the Stamford Government Center, November 19, 2013 at 7:00 p.m. . . .

MR. ROBERT IKE: No person in the United States shall, on the ground of race, color, or national origin, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subject to discrimination under any program or activity receiving federal financial assistance.

This brochure is designed to assist you to understand your rights under Title 6 of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. We have it in Spanish and English at the table as you come in.

We also have a voluntary disclosure form, Title 6, and we're asking all attendees, it's voluntary, but we would appreciate it if you would please take time and fill out the form before you leave this evening.

It's a voluntary form. This is the first

time we are undertaking this program to be sure that all persons are included in our public outreach program.

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. My name is Robert W. Ike from the Connecticut Department of Transportation. I will serve as the moderator for tonight's public hearing.

I'd like to introduce you to the individuals to my right, who are here this evening to make presentations and listen to your comments and concerns.

Mr. Robert Brown of the Department's Office of Engineering; Messrs. Donald R. Costello and Steve Mitchell of the consultant firm URS Corporation; Mr. Brett Stark of the consultant firm BL Companies, and Mr. Steven Degen from the Department's Division of Rights of Way.

We also have a litany of staff from the City of Stamford, Department of Transportation, BL Companies and URS Corporation. There's too many to list. I don't want to miss anybody, so I'd just like everybody to raise their hand. So we have all the staff here to assist you this evening.

We are meeting with you this evening, in order to discuss the Department's proposed plan for the

reconstruction of Atlantic Street and replacement of Metro-North Railroad Bridge here in Stamford.

We are tonight at the preliminary design phase. I would like emphasize that no final decision has been made on this proposed project. That is why we are here this evening, to gather your input in order to help us reach a final decision.

This public hearing is being conducted in accordance with the Connecticut Department of Transportation's policy, entitled "Public Involvement Guidance Manual, Revised 2009."

Plans of the proposed project have been available for public inspection here at the Stamford Engineering Department, Stamford Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, as well as at the Connecticut Department of Transportation, Office of Engineering, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, between 8:30 a.m. and 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

I will now discuss the format of tonight's hearing, then I will turn the podium over to presenters, who will give background, design, and rights of way presentations of this proposed project.

My intent is to conduct a fair and orderly

hearing tonight by following a particular format. We would appreciate your patience during my remarks, as well as the presentations to follow, by holding your remarks and comments until this portion of the hearing has been completed.

We will be happy to remain here this evening until everyone has had a reasonable opportunity to speak.

Experience has shown that audible recordings can only be made if the person making a statement uses the microphone connected to the recording equipment. A microphone has been set up, and, if you wish to make a statement, please come to the microphone after I read your name from the sign-up sheet.

Please introduce yourself, and, if you are representing an organization, please give its name, as well. If you didn't sign up to speak, but a question comes to mind, feel free to raise your hand, and I will be happy to recognize you after I go through the speaker sign-up sheet.

For those individuals, who have a prepared statement, you may read it into the record, if you so desire, however, if the statement is lengthy, you are asked to offer a written copy of the statement for the

record and give a brief summary of its contents.

Such attachments to the record carry as much weight as the transcribed verbal testimony received here tonight when the transcript is reviewed.

If you wish to speak this evening, we have a sign-up sheet at the entrance to the room. There is a three-minute time limit on all first-time speakers. There will be no yielding of your time to other speakers. Your time is for your own comments.

If, after all first-time speakers have finished, anyone, who would like the opportunity to speak again, a reasonable amount of additional time will be allotted for this purpose.

Anyone, who wishes to present written comments for the public hearing record, should give them to me before the end of tonight's hearing.

As a result of information that you might learn at tonight's hearing, you may wish to make additional comments on the proposed project.

Written statements or exhibits concerning it may be mailed or delivered to the attention of Mr. Scott Hill, Manager of Bridges and Facilities, 2800 Berlin Turnpike, Newington, Connecticut, 06131-7546.

This information is also available in the

handout, which you should have received when you entered the room tonight. The deadline for receipt of comments on this proposal is December 6, 2013. Written statements or exhibits must be postmarked by this date and must be reproducible in black and white on not larger than eight-and-a-half-by-11-inch paper.

This information will be made part of the public hearing record and will be considered in the same regard as oral statements.

I would like to give the Mayor of Stamford here or his representative an opportunity to speak before we begin our presentations. Is the Mayor or his representative available? Yes, sir? Mr. Mayor or his representative? Please come forward, sir. You have to speak into the microphone.

Introduce yourself and give your name and address.

MR. ERNIE ORGERA: My name is Ernie Orgera. I'm Director of Operations for the City of Stamford. On behalf of Mayor Pavia, I welcome you all here.

I just want everyone to know that this was Mayor Pavia's favorite project. That was the most important project of his administration. He'd love to

see this project get off the ground, which we're seeing tonight.

It's an important project. We know that this railroad underpass has been there since I think it's 1908 or close to that. It's in dire need of expansion. We can't get any vehicles under that trestle, some larger vehicles. It's going to open up traffic for the entire South End.

We're very excited about this project. Thank you very much on Mayor Pavia's behalf, and welcome everyone again to this project. Thank you.

MR. IKE: Thank you, sir. At this point, I will turn the podium over to Mr. Robert Brown, who will give some background information on this proposed project.

Mr. Brown will be followed by Mr. Steve Mitchell, Mr. Mitchell will be followed by Mr. Donald Costello, Mr. Costello will be followed by Mr. Brett Stark, Mr. Stark will be followed by Mr. Steven Degen, and Mr. Degen will be followed by Mr. Brown, who returns for final design comments. Mr. Brown?

MR. ROBERT BROWN: Thank you, Bob. Project purpose and need, this project was undertaken, we began it as a feasibility study back in 2009. We were

looking at five bridges in the area. The objective was to look at these locations and study it for potential mobility improvements between the north and the south of the town.

It was essentially a collaboration between CONN DOT and the City of Stamford and the FHWA. Ultimately, the priority was determined to be Atlantic Street, primarily because of its location, the proximity to the station, the bus station, also, and the terminus of the urban transit way, so we pursued it in the preliminary design to the point you see tonight.

The goals improve the capacity, we did that, and improve the existing vertical under clearance, which you have to keep in mind these bridges are from 1896, so they were from well before we had automobiles and buses and trucks and everything else, and one of the primary objectives was to do this while minimizing the disturbance to the existing traffic and to the public, maintain the operation of the existing roadways throughout the construction of the project.

This goes into duration, duration being -- the duration is determined by this objective of minimizing the actual disruptions, and there's an effective use of the funds, because we tried to

accomplish as many goals as possible with the project.

We have -- this is the project location, and I think you can probably see it from there. You can see the proximity. You've got the I-95, the Exit 8 on I-95 northbound, which we're going to be addressing, and the Atlantic Street bridge, which is the orange rectangle there.

Here's an aerial view of the area, and then this gives you a better sense of where the transit way is, the urban transit way, the portion that's completed now.

The critical elements of this project are the replacement of that 1896 railroad bridge, the reconstruction of Atlantic Street with a -- we're going to be re-profiling it, so it's a bit lower, to improve the vertical clearance and considerable wider, and we're going to be reconfiguring the I-95 northbound Exit 8 off ramp, and that's a big -- it has become a big part of this project. That is going to be -- the ultimate product here is a much smoother-operating off ramp.

Then, at the same time, we're going to be putting a wall in along the south side of South State Street, which will enable us to accommodate future Metro North track expansion in the area.

Critical project elements, minimize construction duration, which I had mentioned before. The utility relocations, these roadways are essentially solid utilities below the bituminous, and then this is a historic structure, and it abuts the historic district along Manhattan Street there.

And, with this, we'll get into detail on the existing roadway and the proposed work on the roadways, and I'll be turning it over to Steve Mitchell.

MR. STEVEN MITCHELL: Good evening. Again, my name is Steve Mitchell. I'm the manager of Highway and Traffic Engineering at URS Corporation.

We are consultants to the State of Connecticut, Department of Transportation, for this project, and I'm going to go over briefly some of the roadway issues and design enhancements that are going to be put into the portion of the project that deals with the roadway operations.

First, what I'd like to do is just quickly walk through the existing roadway conditions in the area, and we're going to start with Atlantic Street.

Here is a picture of Atlantic Street looking to the north from the vicinity of the urban transit way.

Presently, as Atlantic Street passes under the railroad bridge, it's quite wide at the south end, but then it necks down to a width of about 28 feet at the north end against South State Street, and it provides a single lane in each direction.

There are sidewalks on both sides behind the pier, so it's a three-span bridge today, with two piers, one at each curb line.

To the north of the bridge and on the other side of South State Street, Atlantic Street is five lanes wide. South of the bridge and from Manhattan Street to the south, it is also five lanes wide, so you have a five-lane section, necking down to two lanes, and then widening back out to five lanes. Clearly, a choke point, which controls the capacity of the entire corridor.

In addition, let me use the right machine here, in addition, the current bridge is very low. It provides only a 12-foot, seven-inch actual measured clearance and is frequently struck by trucks.

This is an accident that occurred only a few weeks ago. When that happens, of course, there is disruption to the roadway system. The street is closed down, the trucks have to be pried out, and it has been a

continuing issue and a continuing problem.

Clearly, it is also a constriction for truck traffic trying to head to the south through the corridor.

South State Street is a roadway that falls under both city and state jurisdiction, depending on where you are. It is classified as what is called a minor urban arterial, and it acts as part of a paired roadway system with North State Street, generally being two lanes through traffic, and then additional turning lanes at various intersections eastbound on South State Street and westbound on North State Street. There are no sidewalks immediately adjacent to the Atlantic Street intersection.

The I-95 northbound Exit 8 off ramp also comes into the intersection. It's a single lane as it exits Interstate 95, but then widens to three lanes at the intersection, where it's controlled by the same traffic signal that operates the entire intersection.

Ramp traffic is only allowed to go straight or turn left onto Atlantic, while South State Street traffic is only allowed to go straight or turn right onto Atlantic Street.

Today, the ramp is at a six percent grade

down from the highway, which is the maximum allowable grade for a ramp condition, and it operates -- of course, it's a very, very busy ramp, because it is one of the primary access points into the downtown area.

Immediately south of the bridge is Manhattan Street. Manhattan Street is a local roadway. It's a one-way street. It is one way in the direction away from Atlantic Street.

There are sidewalks on the south side, although they're somewhat discontinuous and have varying pavement types, and there is no sidewalk on the north side for the most part.

Although it is fairly wide, there is parking on both sides of the street, so it's essentially a single lane of traffic traveling away from Atlantic Street.

Now the initial thing that we are looking at here is replacing the railroad bridge to widen it to provide additional lanes and get rid of that choke point, and, also, to create additional vertical clearance for trucks going under the bridge.

When we do that, we end up with several other construction goals as outcomes of that initial project. We would like to minimize the depth of the

structure, the thickness of the structure, because the rail cannot move vertically. It has to be where it is today, so we want to get more vertical clearance, so we want to keep the structure depth to a minimal amount, so that we can -- so that we don't have to widen the roadway below it all that much. The only way to get additional vertical clearance is to lower the roadway.

We are looking at lowering the roadway approximately three and a half feet, in order to gain a proper vertical clearance of 14 feet, six inches.

When we lower the roadway, we will be providing a total of six travel lanes, three in each direction, so we will be widening the bridge, pushing the abutments back, as well, and, as Bob mentioned earlier, the reconfigured bridge will also provide for the addition of one more track on the Metro North corridor.

This plan, which there's a large addition over on the easels there and there are also some in front of you on the tables, shows the general project and the project limits.

The limits, essentially, along Atlantic Street go from the urban transit way at the south end under the bridge through the South State intersection under the Interstate 95 bridge and terminate at the

southerly gutter line of North State Street, so we don't actually go into North State Street. We don't actually go into the urban transit way intersection.

To the east and west, because we are lowering the grade of Atlantic Street here, then this intersection is also lowered. That will cause us to construct, reconstruct portions of South State Street back to where we can meet grade, and that is almost to Guernsey Street. The Guernsey Street intersection is just beyond the limits of where we would need to be reconstructing.

East of that point, the construction would go to approximately the same place before we meet grade, however, there is some additional work that we will need to do, which will bring us all the way to Canal Street, and I'll describe that in more detail in a moment.

Looking a little more closely at the intersection, itself, again, the picture, we are lowering the road about three and a half feet there, so we are going to be chasing the grade back to the intersection to meet grade.

We will also be going about 150 feet down Manhattan Street to meet grade, and then we will be coming back along South State Street to meet grade here

and approximately here, which is where we would meet the existing grade.

If you recall, when I was talking about the Exit 8 off ramp, that's at its maximum six percent grade today. If we left it in its current configuration, we would have to lower the touchdown point, because the intersection is being lowered.

That would result in a more than eight percent grade on the ramp, which is not acceptable. We, therefore, looked at alternatives of how to handle this ramp.

One alternative would be to push the starting point back along the highway, but there are some geometric issues along the highway that precluded that, so, instead, what we are going to do is the ramp is going to be reconfigured to come down to the intersection, bridge over the intersection on a bridge on a structure, and then come down to touch down to South State Street east of Atlantic Street.

Moving to the right on this picture, so you can see that a little more clearly, here is the ramp coming down, touching down on South State Street. We will then continue the construction through to Canal Street, where we will have a five-lane section provided.

That's one more than today.

There will be three through lanes, as well as turn lanes to the right and to the left. Two of the advantages of this new lane configuration are that the through lanes will be better configured for traffic continuing to the east, which has to split and go either onto the ramp or stay on South State Street.

With the three-lane configuration of through traffic, we'll be able to make that a much cleaner, simpler movement, and, also, it improves the capacity for the right turns and left turns.

In addition, as I said today, we have restrictions on South State Street at Atlantic. The traffic cannot turn left and cannot turn right from the ramp. Those restrictions will be lifted.

Traffic at Atlantic Street from South State will be able to turn in either direction. Traffic from the ramp or from South State will approach whatever lane they need to be in to turn right or turn left at Canal Street.

We'll accomplish that by introducing an additional traffic signal at the ramp touchdown, which will simply be a two-phase signal going -- either allowing ramp traffic to go or South State Street traffic

to go, essentially allowing them to come and mix and get into their proper lanes for turning.

There are a number of issues associated with the roadway construction at this location, primarily due to the extremely tight area that we are working in.

This is a cross-section looking to the east on South State Street immediately east of the Atlantic Street intersection.

What a cross-section is is, if you could picture taking a giant slice through the roadway and standing and looking at what it looked like, you'd be able to see the relative locations vertically, as well as horizontally, of all of the different components.

Interstate 95 is up high, of course, over here. The new proposed flyover ramp is a little bit lower, but not all the way down to the ground, because we have to maintain clearance under it.

On the right, the Metro North railroad embankment today, it's a little hard to see in this slide, but it ends right here.

In order to provide the additional track, that wall will be pushed out to this location here, so we only end up with this area to build South State Street, so we are in a fairly confined location.

In addition to the confines horizontally and vertically, as was mentioned earlier, there is a saturation of utilities in this location. Virtually, every utility has to be relocated, because it will be too close to the surface. When we lower the road, it will have to be moved, so all of that has to be accommodated in this very, very tight area.

This project, as Bob mentioned before me, this went through a concept design phase and quite a bit of study over a period of a few years to determine the best way to handle this type of construction in this very confined area.

Originally, this complexity led to a concept design that closed foreclosing Atlantic Street for an extended period of time. Pretty much for the entire project duration.

At that time, the construction was seen as being demolishing the existing bridge and constructing a new bridge one track at a time, working your way across the Metro North right of way.

The result of that was a four to five-year construction period, during which time Atlantic Street would be closed.

In addition, with Atlantic Street closed

and the construction going on, there was really nowhere to put the ramp, so the ramp was also going to face closure for a substantial portion of that time.

Clearly, that was not something anyone was anxious to say was a good idea, and, as we continued to look at it, we decided to look at some innovative types of bridge construction, which Don is going to describe in a moment.

The bridge construction will allow us to accelerate the construction of the bridge to do it in a much more concentrated period, and we are going to be able to keep both Atlantic Street and South State Street and the ramp open for the majority of the contract duration.

We've also shortened that contract duration to a period of approximately 30 months, so about two and a half years. It would be a three-construction season type of work.

There are certain times -- oh, in addition, I just saw the bullet there, in addition, this new type of construction will minimize impacts on Metro North. The track closures will be kept to a minimum.

There will be periodic track closures primarily at night, but they're a much shorter duration

than would have been experienced earlier.

Certain operations are going to require road closures and detouring. Because of that limited confine of space, we simply cannot get everything done.

There are, for instance, times when utility work is going to require excavations that literally take up the entire road.

There are going to be times when certain of the walls that are built are going to require construction to set those walls in place. It is simply going to take up all of the road, so there are going to be brief periods when construction activities close the road.

We are looking at primarily trying to do those with night work, with weekend work, and creating temporary lanes around the construction areas as much as possible to keep roads open whenever possible and to minimize impact during the peak periods, in the morning and afternoon for the commuters.

Nonetheless, they are not completely avoidable. For instance, as you'll see, Don is going to talk about the erection of the bridge.

There will be a period of time, when both part of the old bridge and part of the new bridge are in

existence next to each other. When that happens, there is nothing left of Atlantic Street to drive a car through, so there will be a period of time, possibly two to three weeks, when Atlantic Street will be closed, so they're not completely gone, but they're substantially better than what they were in the original design.

With that, I'm going to turn the mike over to Don Costello of our office, who is going to talk about the much more interesting stuff of how the bridge is going to be constructed.

MR. DONALD COSTELLO: Thank you, Steve. I'm just going to talk a little bit, just say a few things about the existing bridge, discuss a few of the components of the new bridge, and then I'm going to take you through this advanced construction technique that we're going to be using for construction of this.

First of all, the existing bridge, as was mentioned before, was built originally in 1896, so it's over 100 years old. It consists of a three-span structure. There's a main span over the roadway, and there are two short end spans over each sidewalk.

It's considered to be an open deck structure, which means the railroad ties are directly fixed to the steel girders and steel stringers.

And the reason that's significant is it doesn't allow flexibility to the railroad to adjust the tracks. What they prefer to see is a ballasted deck, which allows them to run the stone ballast over the deck. It gives them more flexibility to move the tracks.

There's a substandard vertical clearance at 12 feet, seven inches. You may see the signs out there for 12 feet, four inches. The Department routinely posts signs a little bit below the actual clearance.

The existing bridge supports, the abutments are stone masonry. The existing piers are stone masonry, and they have steel vents over those stone masonry pedestals.

Finally, the bridge is in poor condition. Now what does poor condition mean? To those of us on the bridge side, it means the bridge is still safe to operate on, but when the flag comes up as it being in poor condition, that's the time to start programming the bridge for rehabilitation.

So this is an image of what we're proposing for the new bridge. It will be a two-span structure. It will consist of concrete-encased steel girders. That's what the structure, itself, will be.

It will have the ability to be widened.

We're going to construct the supports, the bridge abutments and piers wide enough to add a sixth track to the structure and wide enough to add a pedestrian platform for the railroad station.

The new bridge will have the ability to have ballast on the deck, so they'll be able to run the gravel ballast. It gives the railroad the ability to adjust the tracks later if it's something that the railroad desires.

As far as the image goes, you're going to see a maintenance walkway, which currently doesn't exist on the bridge, and there are railings, so that will be visible on the fascia of each side of the bridge.

And we're also going to be undercutting the road, as Steve discussed, and our goal is to achieve a 14-foot, six-inch vertical clearance. How did we come up with 14/six? Well the legal height of a vehicle is 13-foot, six inches, and, so, for this type of classification of road, 14/six is a standard that we try to achieve.

I'm going to take you through the construction sequence, just to give you a little bit of a description of what's going to happen.

We're going to be moving a catenary

portal. There's a catenary portal that's very close to the existing bridge. Those are the overhead supports for the catenary. Then we're going to be installing what we call jump spans, which are short spans behind each bridge support. They support the railroad tracks, themselves.

Once those are installed -- those will be installed one track at a time on a weekend closure. Once those are installed, that will allow us to construct the new bridge abutments underneath live traffic under those jump spans.

Once those are constructed, simultaneously we'll be constructing the new bridge pier foundations in Atlantic Street, so those will be done. You'll see we'll be putting in temporary supports, so we'll be able to go in during weekend closures, excavate the road, put portions of the foundation in, and then close it back up, so we can open up the traffic again by Monday morning.

Now, finally, once the bridge abutments and the pier foundations are ready to go, we're going to be assembling the bridge superstructures offsite, and, so, we've identified at least one site on each side south of the railroad and north of the railroad.

The super structures will be assembled there and transported during a weekend closure of the

bridge to the bridge site.

So, on the weekend closure, what's going to -- what you're going to see happen is we'll be closing rail traffic. They'll be demolishing a portion of the existing bridge, and then we'll be rolling in a portion of the super structure.

That super structure will have enough capacity to hold at least two of the tracks. We'll be maintaining at least two tracks of rail service during that weekend period.

What we have next is an animation that kind of walks through this construction sequence. Again, just orienting you to the site, the first thing it's going to show you is the installation of the jump spans.

After that, we'll be excavating underneath those jump spans for installation of the bridge abutments.

This is the pier temporary supports, and then the pier support will be in between these.

Okay. This is a weekend closure, where we're actually demolishing part of the existing structure. We have train traffic supported on two of the existing tracks. This is a map of the assembly areas. One is at the corner of Dock and John Street. It's city-

owned property. The other location is at the Elm Street entrance ramp to I-95. That's state-owned property. These are the modular transporters that are bringing in the super structure elements.

Again, once those first two tracks are open, that's it for the first weekend. This is showing you the second weekend shutdown period.

Again, the sequence didn't show you the installation of the flyover bridge, but some of that's taking place simultaneously with the other construction.

I just want to mention some of the retaining walls along South State Street. This is a view looking east from a location on the approach to the Atlantic Street intersection. That's the Atlantic Street intersection in front of you.

You can see the railroad embankment walls on your right, and that's a support retaining wall on your left for the existing Exit 8 off ramp, and then, similar to the image that's on the board you may have seen already, this is the retaining walls.

We're incorporating the use of form liners to create the appearance of the brownstone masonry.

With that, I'm going to move on to some other considerations for the project. They include

utilities, historic and environmental issues, rights of way, schedule and cost. I'm going to run through the utility issues, Brett Stark is going to speak to the historic and environmental, Steve Degen is going to be speaking to the rights of way, and then Bob is going to finish up with the schedule and costs.

Very quickly on the utilities, there are numerous utilities in the roadways around the project site. Almost all of them need to be relocated, and, in short, we're currently working with each of the utility companies to coordinate their relocations to accommodate this project.

And, then, with that, I'll turn it over to Brett.

MR. BRETT STARK: Thanks, Don. Good evening, everyone. My name is Brett Stark. I'm a Project Manager with the consultant firm of BL Companies. We are a consultant firm that's been retained by the Department of Transportation to provide adjunct support services for various projects.

My role on this project tonight is that of the Department's project engineer for the roadway design elements, but my presentation here this evening will focus on, as Don said, environmental and historic aspects

of the project.

Before I go any further, I just want to begin by noting that what you see here tonight represents the culmination of a great deal of effort that's been undertaken on this project to date, but, in the grand scheme of things, in terms of overall design, we are in what's called the preliminary design phase, and we're about 30 percent complete, which is, according to DOT practices, this is our time to come solicit public comment.

I'll address one aspect of public comments in a few moments, but just wanted to make sure that was out there and understand that, you know, we don't want you to think that, essentially, everything here is 100 percent set in stone, a fait accompli, that there is room for public input here.

The first thing I'd like to talk about tonight is the idea of context-sensitive design. It was brought up on one slide earlier, but just very briefly, again, the Department advocates the application of context-sensitive principles on all DOT projects.

Basically, what that involves really is, as the name suggests, taking the site, itself, its past, present and future use into consideration.

As Don noted on the slide showing the walls, again, you have the rendering of the proposed bridge at the bottom here and, again, with these walls. One thing we're showing an acknowledgement of the historic nature of the area.

The railroad bridge, again, dates to 1896, and we do abut the South End Historic District. We do propose the treatment of any new walls with a proposed concrete form that will be stained to replicate a brownstone masonry, similar to the existing retaining walls and abutments.

We have also been asked by the Town of Stamford that any existing brownstone from the abutments and walls that can be salvaged be salvaged and be turned over to the city, and we will abide by that as we move forward with the design.

Again, regarding historic and cultural resource impacts, we have a bridge, again, built in 1896. As is the Department's standard practice, all projects are submitted to the Connecticut State Historic Preservation Officer for review and comment, in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

As a result of the screening by the State

Historic Preservation Officer on this project, the SHPO noted that the Atlantic Street bridge possesses historic and engineering importance and is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

As a result, the proposed replacement of the structure was determined to constitute an adverse effect on the historic resource.

The SHPO stipulated in his review that the Department employ two mitigation measures to mitigate for the loss of the historic resource.

The first is the photo documentation of the existing structure and archiving of that photo documentation officially at the Thomas J. Dodd Research Center up at the University of Connecticut.

Copies could be made available of these documents to the city, as well, for record keeping in town.

The other requirement was that the Department publish a brief history of the Atlantic Street bridge and description of the proposed project, including some supporting photographs taken from the documentation in the Society for Industrial Archeology newsletter.

Presently, the Department and its consultants have undertaken the documentation and

submitted that to the State Historic Preservation Officer for review and approval. In addition, the article has been drafted and turned over to the Society for Industrial Archeology for publication in an upcoming issue.

It's important to note that, as a result of any comments that come out of this or any further coordination with the city or project stakeholders, that additional mitigated measures may be incorporated moving forward in the project.

I'm going to talk a little bit about the impacts of this project. One thing we did, if you noticed on the meeting invitation, this is also, besides being a standard public hearing, this is also a public scoping meeting.

The public scoping meeting applies, because of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act, and, basically, there the SHPO's determination, that the existing bridge is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, triggered a need for the project to comply with the provisions of the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act.

Per CEPA, as we refer to it acronymically, all Connecticut state agencies are required to prepare an

environmental classification document to help determine which of its actions may significantly affect the environment.

An environmental classification document is a listing of typical agency actions that may have significant environmental impacts.

The DOT's environmental classification document specifies that the demolition or major alteration of any building structure or site listed or deemed by the State Historic Preservation Officer to be eligible for the National Register shall be considered a significant, potential significant environmental impact.

When a Connecticut state agency feels that the potential exists for a significant impact, it notifies other agencies and the public through a scoping notice, which is published in the Environmental Monitor, an online publication.

Members of the public and any interested state agency or representative may submit comments on the nature and extent of any environmental impacts of the proposed action during the 30 days following the publication of the notice in the Environmental Monitor.

The scoping notice for this project was published in the Monitor on November 5, 2013, and the

comment period concludes at the end of business on Friday, December 6, 2013.

Again, we are conducting this meeting tonight as a joint public hearing and joint public scoping meeting.

Typically, a public scoping meeting is not required for a project, unless requested by 25 persons or an association having not less than 25 members, however, in the case of this project, it was decided to conduct a joint scoping meeting in conjunction with the Department standard public involvement process.

Again, just to reiterate the comment, the context for all comments, is Mr. Scott Hill of the Department's Division of Bridges and Facilities. We've got the address up here. We will put this back up at the end.

Again, the final date for comments we're requesting is December 6th.

Once the public comment period has decided, the next step under CEPA is for the Department to determine whether or not the project requires the preparation of an environmental impact evaluation. That will be a determination made, based on comments received by the Department before the deadline.

It's important to note that, if the Department determines that an environmental impact evaluation is necessary, it will be -- a draft version will be made available through the Environmental Monitor, and the public will be allowed to comment on the EIE.

Should the Department determine that an environmental impact evaluation is not required, the Department will instead publish what is known as a post-scoping notice, also to be published on the Environmental Monitor website.

If a post-scoping notice is published, there will be no further public comment allowed in the formal sense under CEPA.

Briefly, to touch on some other environmental aspects of the project, you know, field investigations to date have not identified any known wetlands or other regulated areas within the project limits.

It should be noted that, you know, based on the way we're working here, railroad property adjacent to an interstate highway, there is the potential for the presence of controlled or contaminated materials in the soils that will be excavated during construction.

Required testing will be conducted, and

project-specific protocols for the handling and disposal of this material will be developed during the final design phase of the project.

During construction, all contractors will be -- all construction activities will be done in accordance with the Department of Transportation's Form 816, which is the standard specifications for road, bridge and related construction.

Included in that document is our provisions for maintaining and following and abiding by best management practices for the handling of sedimentation and control of sedimentation during construction operations.

With that, I'm going to turn it over to Mr. Steve Degen of the Department's Rights of Way Division to talk briefly about the right of way process. Thank you.

MR. STEVEN DEGEN: Thank you, Brett. Good evening. My name is Steve Degen. I'm with the Division, Department's Division of Rights of Way.

It's our responsibility to acquire all property rights necessary for transportation projects. Plans that have been presented to you tonight have indicated that there are no private property rights that

are necessary at this point in time, however, we're at 30 percent design, and, as the design progresses, this may change.

Any time federal funds are used in any aspect of a project, the Department conforms to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Act of 1970, as amended.

Property rights were also acquired in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes 13a-73 and 13a-98c.

As the project moved forward, if private property rights are required, the property owner will receive a letter from the Department, stating the Department's intent to acquire the property, along with a map showing the area that's going to be impacted. This map eventually gets filed in the town land records.

Once evaluation activities are complete, an agent from our division will make the offer to the property owner, however, if an agreement cannot be reached, the Department will acquire the necessary property rights to the power of eminent domain.

Notice of condemnation will be filed with the Superior Court, along with the state's offer. The money is available to the property owner at any time,

without prejudice. The property owner will have six months from the date of the taking to file an appeal.

One issue to bring out is it's not always necessarily a matter of we can't reach an agreement on the value, that eminent domain may be required. There are issues, where there may be liens on a property that we can't get releases from, and, under those circumstances, we will still acquire the property through eminent domain to get the releases necessary for those properties.

At this point, I'll turn it back over to Bob for final closure.

MR. BROWN: Okay. I'll repeat. As we're drawing to the close of the preliminary design phase, our schedule now is try and finish up the design in the year 2014 for an advertising in the fall of 2014.

The intent would be to get the construction started in 2015 in the spring, as early as possible, and we anticipate that this will take -- it will be in construction until the fall of 2017.

This is what we are working with now, as far as the schedule. It's entirely subject to change. And the estimated construction cost now will range between -- we think it's going to be between 75 and 100

million dollars. Again, that, too, is subject to change. Bob Ike?

MR. IKE: Thank, Mr. Brown. Thank you, presenters. We have one speaker on the sign-up sheet. Wes Haynes, would you please come to the microphone, please, and make your comments for the record? 22 Brightside Drive. The microphone is right here, sir. Yes, sir?

MR. WES HAYNES: My name is Wes Haynes, and I'm the Executive Director of the Historic Neighborhood Preservation Program, Stamford's citywide Historic Preservation Program.

I just want to make a couple of brief comments. We will probably address this longer in a letter and hopefully, perhaps, a meeting at some point, but we concur with the SHPO determination of eligibility for the railroad bridge, and we also support their determination that it will have an adverse effect on the resource. Obviously, demolition of a resource always has an adverse effect.

And I was glad to see that you mentioned that the South End is a National Register District. It's one of Stamford's greatest treasures. It's our largest historic district.

There's a lot of change going on there now, but it is still the core that tells the story of Stamford's industrial development in the 19th Century and how we got to where we are today.

My concerns about this project are not so much about the bridge, but about the impact beyond the bridge. We still have no idea what's going on on Atlantic Street beyond this project, south of Atlantic Street, as this is the gateway into the South End Historic District, and it really needs to -- this is in the heart of the district. Atlantic Street still has a lot of historic resources on it.

We think that those should be linked and put under 106 review at this time, as well, and I'll address my comments in a letter later on. Thank you.

MR. IKE: Thank you, sir. Do we have any other first-time speakers? Do we have any other first-time speakers? Yes, sir? Please come to the microphone. Give your name and address for the record.

MR. JOHN RUOTOLO: Good evening. My name is John Ruotolo. I'm Vice President of Operations for the Stamford Downtown Special Services District, and I will also be brief, because I would like to submit testimony in writing after the hearing.

I'm a little surprised that, despite written and oral testimony that I've heard at previous hearings when this was a five-bridge project, and the only thing I really have to go by for pedestrian access is a rendering I see on the wall here, that so little consideration was given to pedestrian access.

I mean I assume that this bridge is a bridge we're going to want to see for another hundred years, and, essentially, we've got an eight-foot land barren and vulnerable pedestrian access way, and we're not really taking into consideration that we have a transportation on one side of it and 10 million square feet of office space on the other side of it and a lot of pedestrians passing back and forth, so we would really like to see a second thought given to the pedestrian access.

There's been much testimony in the past. There will be more in the future. Thank you.

MR. IKE: Do we have any other first-time speakers? Yes, sir? Please come to the microphone and give your name and address for the record.

MR. BARRY MICKELSON: Barry Mickelson, Idlewood Drive, Stamford, Connecticut.

I just wanted to make a brief comment.

One, we've had traffic, not traffic, but flooding problems under that bridge. I didn't hear any comment, as to whether or not those will be eliminated.

I believe the water table is very high under certain portions of the bridges. Is this something that will be addressed, because that certainly is a problem we want to eliminate?

MR. IKE: Would one of our staff like to make comments or meet with this gentleman after? Give your name and address for the record.

MR. MITCHELL: Thank you. It's Steve Mitchell, again, with URS Corporation.

At this level of the preliminary design, we have done a preliminary assessment of the drainage situation, and we have provided drainage reports to the Department for review that show that we will, in fact, be draining the entire area.

We are utilizing a gravity system, so we will be able to take the drainage out by gravity. We will not have to pump, however, it is not a completed study at this point, because the plans are not up to that level of design.

So, at this level, which is 30 percent, we do believe we will be taking care of the drainage under

the bridge.

MR. MICKELSON: There has been flooding under these bridges. The other question I had, and that's apropos of comments by John Ruotolo, is that, if you're putting a platform over Atlantic Street, pedestrian platform, to give thought to some kind of consideration for pedestrian access to the platform. Thank you.

MR. IKE: Are there any other first-time speakers? Any first-time speakers? Any second-time speakers? Do we have any second-time speakers? Do we have any additional first or second-time speakers?

Seeing no further first or second-time speakers -- yes, sir. Please come to the record and give your name and address for the record, please.

MR. RUOTOLO: One more brief comment. John Ruotolo, Vice President of Operations for Stamford Downtown Special Services District.

One thing I did forget to note was -- and I do certainly understand that this is only in the 30 percent design phase, but I would hope that there's some accommodation given to the potential for light rail in 10 years, in 50 years, in 75 years, but some accommodation is made to make that possible, if it should ever come to

being.

MR. IKE: Thank you. Do we have any other speakers? First-time, second-time speakers? Any other speakers?

If there are no further comments, I will now close tonight's hearing. On behalf of Commissioner James P. Redeker, I would like to thank you for coming and expressing your views tonight.

Please remember that you have until December 6, 2013 to submit any written postmarked comments to the Connecticut Department of Transportation.

Thank you for coming, and have a good evening.

(Whereupon, the hearing adjourned.)

HEARING RE: REPLACEMENT OF MNRR BRIDGE
NOVEMBER 19, 2013

INDEX OF SPEAKERS